

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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### RULES REGULATING ENDANGERED PLANTS PROPOSED

Regulations protecting plants under the Endangered Species Act have been proposed by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Keith M. Schreiner, Associate Director, announced today.

The proposal, published recently in the Federal Register, would regulate activities involving endangered and threatened plants and place restrictions on their interstate and foreign commerce, importation, exportation, and related activities. Where appropriate, the prohibitions would also apply to plant seeds, roots, and parts. Currently there are no plants on either the endangered or threatened list.

Interested persons have until August 9, 1976, to comment on the proposal. This proposal would pave the way for the Fish and Wildlife Service to give full consideration to the more than 3,000 species of native plants identified by the Smithsonian Institution as being candidates for either the endangered or threatened lists. These species are currently under review. However, the regulations being proposed now are needed before any plant species can be formally listed.

These regulations would also enable the Service to comply more fully with requirements of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora by making possible the addition of the 74 species of foreign plants on Appendix I of the Convention to U.S. lists. Appendix I species are endangered in part because of commerce.

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Most provisions and prohibitions of the Endangered Species Act apply to both animals and plants, and in general this proposal would amend the endangered wildlife regulations published in the September 26, 1975, Federal Register to include plants as well.

These regulations, however, differ from those concerning wildlife in that they impose no restrictions upon the taking of a threatened or endangered plant. In addition, the intrastate sale of such plants would not be prohibited. The interstate movement of listed species would not be regulated unless it was in the course of a commercial activity involving a change of ownership of the plants.

The Service is aware that these proposed regulations could have a significant impact. It is hoped that comments to the Service will bring out any potential problems so that final rules will be effective, fair, and encourage voluntary compliance. Therefore the Service will hold several public hearings in various areas of the country on these regulations. The times and locations of these hearings will be announced in the near future.

Anyone wishing to comment on this proposal should submit their remarks in writing to the Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, P.O. Box 19183, Washington, D.C. 20036.

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